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S E C R E T SECTION 01 OF 04 AMMAN 008166

SIPDIS

STATE FOR S/I, NEA/I, AND NEA/ARPI
TREASURY FOR LARRY MCDONALD
NSC FOR CHARLES DUNNE
CENTCOM FOR BRIGADIER GENERAL MARK KIMMITT
CJCS FOR BRIGADIER GENERAL MICHAEL JONES
OSD FOR JON FERKO

E.O. 12958: DECL: 10/13/2015

TAGS: [PREL](#) [PGOV](#) [PTER](#) [EFIN](#) [IR](#) [IZ](#) [SY](#) [JO](#)

SUBJECT: AMBASSADOR JEFFREY AND DELEGATION MEET WITH
JORDANIAN OFFICIALS TO DISCUSS IRAQ

Classified By: CDA David Hale for 1.4 (B) and (D)

1. (S) SUMMARY: On October 9, S/I Ambassador Jeffrey and his delegation met with King Abdullah, Foreign Minister Farouq Kasrawi, Finance Minister Adel Kodah, Chairman of the Jordanian Armed Forces General Khalid Sarairah, and General Intelligence Directorate chief Samih Asfoura. The Jordanians pledged to continue urging other Arabs to upgrade ties with Iraq. END SUMMARY.

2. (SBU) Accompanying Senior Advisor to the Secretary and Coordinator for Iraq Ambassador James Jeffrey and Charge were: Brigadier General Mark Kimmitt (Deputy Director, Plans and Policy-CENTCOM), Brigadier General Michael Jones (Deputy Director of Politico-Military Affairs-J5), Ambassador Christopher Ross (Senior Advisor for NEA/I), Jon Ferko (Special Assistant to the Assistant Secretary of the Department of Defense), Andrew Liepmann (Director, Office of Iraq Analysis), Larry McDonald (Director for Middle East and North Africa, US Department of Treasury), Charles Dunne (Director for Iraq, National Security Council), Christine Sanford (Special Assistant to Ambassador Jeffrey) and Maryz Habib (NEA/I Desk Officer).

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FM KASRAWI SHARES HIS VIEWS ON IRAQ

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3. (C) Amb. Jeffrey explained to Foreign Minister Farouq Kasrawi that the delegation was in the region in order to lay out for our partners the USG's strategy for moving toward a democratic Iraq. The U.S. recognized the importance of obtaining Iraqi Sunni Arabs, support for the draft constitution. Iraq's neighbors needed to help Iraq become free and stable. He also explained that the USG was concerned over Iranian influence in Iraq. Jeffrey closed by sharing the USG's appreciation for Jordan's assistance, including the training of new Iraqi security forces in Jordan.

4. (C) Kasrawi said the GOJ was urging a strong relationship with Iraq and planned to strengthen ties further. Kasrawi reported how, during the Arab foreign ministers, meeting in Jeddah October 2, he had worked to impress on to the other FMs the Arab states, interest in a positive outcome to the Iraqi political process. He believed his efforts had met with success, and hoped that the momentum would continue.

5. (C) Kasrawi said it was time to direct the international media's attention away from U.S. forces, and toward Iraqis, own efforts. A careful drawdown of coalition forces from Iraq would help; however, he agreed with Amb. Jeffrey that this had to be done with realistic benchmarks keyed to improvements in security, and not arbitrary deadlines.

6. (C) Kasrawi believed that following the October 15 referendum on the constitution, the Arab world must help Iraq's three chief communities achieve reconciliation. Kasrawi saw the election of a moderate parliament in the December elections as an essential step toward further engagement of the Sunni Arabs.

7. (C) When Jeffrey asked for Kasrawi's ideas on reconciliation, the Minister pointed out the importance of countering Iran's considerable presence in Iraq. Iran worked carefully, at all levels of society, to strengthen its influence sector by sector; Syria, by contrast, exerts its influence through insurgent fighters but has no other levers in Iraq. Jeffrey commented that AL SecGen Amre Musa and the whole of the Arab League needed to watch closely the levels of Iranian influence in Iraq when explaining Shia interest in a national option. Jeffrey commented that many others felt that the political process must guard against giving the Kurds rights not afforded others, & la Quebec. All three communities, but especially the Sunni Arabs, needed consideration. Kasrawi then asked Jeffrey what the USG wanted Jordan to do. Jeffrey said we needed the GOJ to encourage other Arab states to get more involved with Iraq, as Jordan is, and we wanted GOJ advice on how to approach

other Arab states.

18. (C) Kasrawi raised the issue of Jordan's Ambassador to Iraq. The GOJ felt it was high time General Ahmad al-Lozi presented his credentials in Iraq, but security was a problem. Perhaps he could present credentials and return to Jordan until a secure residence was found. He said the GOJ would continue its outreach to Iraq, and continue to encourage others in the Arab World to do the same.

19. (C) Turning again to Iran, Kasrawi said a way needed to be found to use Arab Shi'a to counter "Persian Shi'a" inroads in Iraq. Many in the Shi'a communities in states neighboring Iran "receive their instructions from Tehran." It would be better for Arab countries to create ties with as many of the Shi'a leaders as possible, and with Arab Shi'a tribal elements, to influence them into accepting a united Iraq. This means finding Shi'a leaders who either reject Iranian-style theology, or who are "genuine Iraqis." He mentioned Muqtada al-Sadr as a "wild card," but "attention should be paid to him and he should be brought into the process." Kasrawi noted Jordan's excellent embryonic relationship with Sistani. He and his staff stressed the need to avoid ignoring other marja, leaders in the Iraqi Shi'a community. However, when his staffer seemed to suggest that this could go so far as to find alternatives to Sistani (Comment: a theme seen in the past with Ayad Allawi, a frequent and respected visitor to Amman. End Comment.) Jeffrey warned his interlocutors to be very careful about any effort in this direction.

10. (C) Brigadier General Michael Jones expressed appreciation for Jordan's support for the effort in Iraq, and briefed Kasrawi on the President's October 6 message concerning the USG's continued commitment in Iraq. The USG is committed to staying the course in Iraq. The transfer to Iraqi forces of full responsibility for security will continue deliberately; there will be no unrealistic deadlines. The coalition transfer to Iraqi forces of sole responsibility for security, region by region, will be based on four factors: 1. the capability of local Iraqi units, 2. enemy condition, meaning the Iraqis, ability to mount and organize concerted attacks against local insurgents, 3. the ability of the Iraqi government to provide basic services to the public, and 4. the capability of coalition forces to return to an area in an emergency. Kasrawi concurred that artificial deadlines would be counterproductive. BG Jones thanked the GOJ on behalf of the U.S. military for all of their efforts in fighting the war on terrorism, not just regarding Iraq.

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KING REQUESTS GUIDANCE ON AL-SADR
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11. (S) Amb. Jeffrey told Jordan's King Abdullah that the President had sent this delegation to six key Arab states to build support for Iraq, and to urge others to follow Jordan's lead. It was necessary to signal to the Sunni Arabs in Iraq that the only way to bring Iraq together was on a democratic political basis. Asked about Iraqi Sunni Arab attitudes to the USG, the King stressed that one of the first ways to increase confidence was to share with the Iraqi Sunni Arab leaders a timetable for U.S. withdrawal. It doesn't matter if that schedule is strictly adhered to, as long as the leaders can show their constituents that there is a plan for withdrawal.

12. (S) The King questioned whether it was possible to rehabilitate Muqtada al-Sadr and draw him into the political mainstream as a counterweight to Iranian influence. Before testing the waters further with al-Sadr - a Sadr envoy had recently visited Amman and sent out significant feelers of a desire to work with moderate forces - the King wanted a green light from the U.S. Amb. Jeffrey was basically positive, with caveats. He stated that it was key for Jordan and the U.S. to consult with one another regarding Al-Sadr. The USG has also reached out to al-Sadr's people, but one had to be very careful. When al-Sadr wanted to be helpful, he was, but he could also cause trouble and was suspected of receiving Iranian monetary support. The King and Amb. Jeffrey agreed that Jordan should continue to seek broad support against the insurgency, but exercise caution with specific individuals whose motives were not clear.

13. (S) Asked about Syria, the King said that much depends on the Mehli's report. The results could be damaging to President Asad. Amb. Ross cautioned that the report might not finger Asad's closest family members, as had been speculated. In turn, the King cautioned the delegation that the Syrians might attempt to appeal to Arab solidarity to resist pressure in response to the report. He felt that he had already seen some wavering in Egypt and Saudi Arabia on this point. It was agreed that the USG and GOJ should consult on this matter further, depending on the outcome of the report.

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SARAIRAH'S OPINIONS ON IRAQ

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14. (C) Jordanian Joint Chiefs chairman General Sarairah reviewed for the delegation the threats facing Jordan along its borders. He made a plea for additional assistance in order for Jordan to strengthen its own border security. Sarairah then turned to terrorism, and the need for all Arab countries to put more pressure on Iran, Syria and Hezbollah to convince them that their continued support for terrorism was a threat to the entire region. Sarairah observed that Iran continues to meddle in Iraqi internal affairs.

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ECONOMIC, FINANCIAL COOPERATION WITH IRAQ

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15. (C) Members of the Jeffrey delegation and Finance Ministry officials discussed debt relief for Iraq, and areas where the GOJ could lend Iraq financial policy guidance. Amb. Jeffrey expressed USG gratitude for Jordan's "strong embrace" of a new Iraq. Finance Ministry Secretary General Kasasbeh responded, "We are willing to do what Iraqis ask us. We see them as a partner." Additional cooperation might include technical assistance on banking, IMF financing, tax reform, and subsidy removal. Kasasbeh pointed to Jordan's graduation from IMF financial support, and a successful campaign to sell oil subsidy removals to the public, as examples that Iraq might emulate. NOTE: Emboffs followed up with MinFin, and will provide Embassy Baghdad with documentation related to Jordan's program of removing oil subsidies. END NOTE.

16. (C) Ambassador Jeffrey asked that Jordan work to resolve the \$1.35 billion debt Iraq owes Jordan in a manner that is consistent with the plan agreed between Iraq and the Paris Club, and make its effort known publicly. SecGen Kasasbeh pledged cooperation, and Treasury representative Larry McDonald offered to check on whether repayment in-kind with Iraqi oil of 20% of the debt would violate Paris Club conditions. COMMENT: While the Secretary General seemed willing to consider a debt reconciliation program, he does not speak authoritatively, and the proposal would have to overcome the objections of other stakeholders, all at a time of worsening macroeconomic conditions in Jordan. The debt itself is held by the Central Bank of Jordan and includes some commercial claims. In the face of declining aid and increasing oil prices, Jordan's own public debt may exceed the legally mandated cap of eighty percent of GDP currently projected for 2006. END COMMENT.

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ASFOURA: SUNNIS MUST BE POLITICALLY ENGAGED

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17. (C) Samih Asfoura, Director of the General Intelligence Directorate (GID), said that the GID's work to engage the Sunnis in the upcoming elections had now shifted to preparing for the conference that the GOJ would host in November for influential Iraqis of all communities to discuss the outcome and next steps. The GID frequently talked with persons from the three chief communities to convince them of the benefits of working together. While all agreed that the Kurds were unique and should maintain regional autonomy, the Sunnis are against federalism for fear of being left out in the cold.

18. (C) Once Iraq became more secure, Asfoura feared, the terrorists would leave Iraq and find another country to target. Syria must be pressed to realign itself with the Arab world rather than with Iran and its anti-U.S. agenda. The USG needed to confront Syria directly in order to get its point across. Any failure of the political process in Iraq would impact Syria domestically. "If there is no peace in Iraq, we are all in danger. Terrorism is as much our battle as it is yours, maybe more because when the U.S. leaves, we are still their neighbors."

19. (C) COMMENT: The GOJ's ideas on Iraq were generally consistent with our own. Jordan is on board with increasing outreach, seeking more involvement on the part of other Arab governments, and in establishing a political system in Iraq that is moderate, democratic and pluralistic to reflect the tapestry that is Iraq.

20. Ambassador Jeffrey cleared this cable.
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